

school, when he told me the story about how my mother died and how my mother's wish was what it came to be, that I be made a part of the Byrd family.

So my uncle—he was a patient, quiet man—toiled in the dark pits of the West Virginia coal mines without any complaint. I never saw him sit at the table and complain about the food—never. He always thought to save me that cake. And, like good fathers everywhere, he encouraged me always to do my best. He encouraged me in my school work. He and she always wanted to see my report card and there was a line on that report card designated “deportment.” He always looked at that as well. He wanted to see how I behaved in school. And he always told me that if I got a whipping in school, I could be sure of getting another one at home.

So he encouraged me in my school work. He did not want me to follow him into the mines which were, in those days, just as dangerous as they had been in 1907, in Monongah.

In all my years, I say to these wonderful young people and to those who are watching out there watching this Senate Chamber today, in all those years I never heard him use God's name in vain. I never heard him complain about his lot in life. He simply toiled on, doing the best he could, a man of few words and few affectionate gestures, but loving nonetheless.

In any event, the first Father's Day was observed on June 19, 1910, in Spokane, WA. In 1924, President Calvin Coolidge supported the idea of a national observance of Father's Day, but it was not until 1966 that President Lyndon Johnson signed a Presidential proclamation declaring the third Sunday in June as the national Father's Day. In 1972, President Nixon established the permanent national observance of Father's Day.

The Bible admonishes us: “Honor thy father and thy mother.” And on this day in June we honor our fathers with gifts, cards, and time spent together as a family. The rest of the year we can only hope to honor our fathers by our own hard work, as we try to live up to the dreams—yes, the dreams—that they have for us.

I think of Kipling's lines at this moment. I think they are quite appropriate:

Our Fathers in a wondrous age,
Ere yet the Earth was small,
Ensured to us an heritage,
And doubted not at all
That we, the children of their heart,
Which then did beat so high,
In later time should play like part
For our posterity.
Then, fretful, murmur not they gave
So great a charge to keep,
Nor dream that awestruck Time shall save
Their labour while we sleep.
Dear-bought and clear, a thousand year,
Our fathers' title runs.
Make we likewise their sacrifice,
Defrauding not our sons.

Mr. President, I close with a short poem by Grace V. Watkins entitled “I

Heard My Father Pray.” I offer it in honor of Titus Dalton Byrd, my Dad, who is looking down from Heaven.

Once in the night I heard my father pray.
The house was sleeping, and the dark above

The hill was wide. I listened to him say
Such phrases of devotion and of love,
So far beyond his customary fashion,
I held my breath in wonder. Then he spoke
My name with such tenderness and such compassion,

Forgotten fountains in my heart awoke.
That night I learned that love is not a thing

Measured by eloquence of hand or tongue,
That sometimes those who voice no whispering

Of their affection harbor love as strong,
As powerful and deathless as the sod,
But mentioned only when they talk with God.

Mr. President, I yield the floor and suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. CORNYN). The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. FRIST. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. SUNUNU). Without objection, it is so ordered.

THE FAA REAUTHORIZATION ACT OF 2003

Mr. SANTORUM. Mr. President, I rise today with my colleague Senator SPECTER to engage the distinguished chairman of the Commerce Committee in a colloquy regarding a proposal to allow airports increased flexibility with the use of the Passenger Facility Charge, PFC, revenues.

Mr. President, as you know, many airports are impacted by the downturn in the aviation industry. In my State, the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania is working with US Airways to maintain its presence at both Pittsburgh and Philadelphia International Airports. Our activities in Pennsylvania include efforts to reduce costs in order to make our airports even more competitive.

The amendment that I filed today would change current law to allow airports increased flexibility in the use of the Passenger Facility Charge revenues so that an airport may choose to use such funds to help retire outstanding debt. I believe that this change would be an important tool for airports, which could benefit from the option of using the funds they receive more effectively.

According to information provided to me, this change, if implemented at Pittsburgh International Airport, would result in millions of dollars in immediate cost savings for both the airport and tenant airplanes operating there.

It is my understanding that Chairman MCCAIN is aware of this issue but has concerns about the approach taken by this amendment. I am also informed, however, that the Chairman

indicated that he plans to examine issues related to airport financing and competitiveness in the current aviation industry environment.

I would like to inquire of Chairman MCCAIN if he would agree to examine this issue and continue discussions to identify solutions that can allow airports to be more competitive in this challenging aviation industry environment.

Mr. SPECTER. Mr. President, I rise as a cosponsor of the amendment offered by my colleague Senator SANTORUM that would provide airports with increased flexibility in the use of their Passenger Facility Charge funds. As Senator SANTORUM mentioned, we are working hard to assist US Airways and to keep the company's large presence in Pennsylvania with its hubs in both Pittsburgh and Philadelphia. Earlier this week I hosted a meeting with US Airways CEO David Siegel in my office that included Governor Rendell, Senator SANTORUM, most of our delegation from the House of Representatives, as well as local elected officials. The purpose of this meeting was to work with US Airways to make our Pennsylvania hubs in Pittsburgh and Philadelphia more cost competitive so that those airports can remain critical assets to US Airways. If enacted, proposals such as our amendment will be of great help to Pennsylvania and will be available for use by other airports throughout the Nation.

Mr. MCCAIN. I thank the distinguished Senators from Pennsylvania for filing this amendment. I am aware of interest in proposals to allow increased flexibility in the use of Passenger Facility Charges as well as other Federal revenues. The Commerce Committee does plan to continue its examination of appropriate Federal policy measures that might address the concerns raised by my colleagues. I look forward to working with my colleagues on this issue.

Mr. SANTORUM. I thank Chairman MCCAIN for agreeing to work with us on this important issue.

Mr. SPECTER. I also thank the chairman.

THE HOMELAND SECURITY GRANT ENHANCEMENT ACT OF 2003

Mr. ROCKEFELLER. Mr. President, I am very proud today to join my colleague, the Senator from Maine, Ms. COLLINS, in introducing the Homeland Security Grant Enhancement Act of 2003. This legislation will bring much-needed coordination to the fund application process for our first responders and State and local officials.

The coordination of grant programs called for by this bill will go a long way to make certain that those who will be first called upon to deal with a threat to the security of the United States will be better prepared to face it. By enacting the Homeland Security Grant Enhancement Act, we can free

municipal governments and first responders of bureaucratic guesswork, allowing them to focus instead on training and execution of response plans.

Currently, Federal programs within the Department of Homeland Security, the Department of Justice, the Department of Health and Human Services, and other Federal agencies provide our first responders with a basic level of support with respect to training and equipment procurement. However, in order to receive this support, State and local officials often must complete separate emergency plans and redundant grant application forms. The information demanded by the various homeland security plans is frequently similar; nonetheless, different Federal agencies require grant applicants to start from square one in each case.

The Homeland Security Grant Enhancement Act of 2003 will put an end to this inefficient practice. Our bill creates an interagency committee, composed of representatives from the Department of Homeland Security, the Department of Health and Human Services, the Department of Transportation, the Department of Justice, and the Environmental Protection Agency, as well as any other department or agency deemed necessary by the President, to eliminate duplication in planning requirements and to simplify the application process. The committee will engage in a three-step process to accomplish this goal. First, within 2 months, it will compile a list of the homeland security assistance programs, identifying planning and administrative requirements for each program. Second, it will conduct a 4-month review of these requirements. Finally, within 8 months, it will report to Congress and to the President with recommendations as to how to streamline and standardize requirements.

In order to provide first responders with the support they need, our bill also creates a Homeland Security Information Clearinghouse. The clearinghouse will work with the interagency committee to make grant information available to first responders and local officials, easing the application process. Many State and local agencies, as well as firefighters, police, and emergency service officials, have found the Homeland Security Act provides insufficient guidance from Federal agencies as to the use of government funding and technical expertise in order to meet security needs. Through the clearinghouse, our bill will provide the coordination needed to locate grant information and other resources within the Federal Government. Easy access to this kind of information will improve immeasurably our State and local agencies' ability to deal with potential threats.

First responders have also cited the Homeland Security Act's lack of guidance regarding how Federal dollars can be spent and to whom these funds can be allocated. Neither the Homeland Security Act nor the Department of

Homeland Security's efforts to implement the law has done much to relieve this problem. Our bill seeks to remedy this by streamlining the Office for Domestic Preparedness homeland security grant process from as many as 12 deliberate steps to just 2 commonsense requirements.

When enacted, the Homeland Security Grant Enhancement Act will put in place grant application processes that are much more efficient and user-friendly. State and local authorities will be called upon to develop a single, 3-year homeland security plan that outlines vulnerabilities and capabilities. Federal grant programs will be reconciled to establish a process for a more logical allocation of resources to meet State and local needs. Local agencies or government officials will then apply for funds based on this plan, which can be revised each year pending approval by the Secretary of Homeland Security. These steps will lead to greater ease in securing funding for local police, fire, and emergency service departments. This means greater security for West Virginians and all Americans.

Perhaps more importantly, this will make certain that State and local officials and first responders are all included in the homeland security planning process, allowing them to access funds and equipment in a timely and efficient manner. Our legislation requires that 80 percent of homeland security funding and resources will reach the local level within 60 days of allocation. The bill encourages flexibility in the use of these funds by authorizing local officials to determine their allocation to planning, equipment, exercises, training, or other homeland security functions.

In order to ensure that rural States are included in Federal grant programs whose eligibility criteria sometime favor urban areas, the Homeland Security Grant Enhancement Act follows a procedure that benefited my State of West Virginia earlier this year when we partially funded first responder programs in the Emergency Supplemental Appropriations bill. As with that legislation, our bill provides that any State whose application for funding through this grant program is approved will receive a minimum of .75 percent of the total amount appropriated for homeland security in a given fiscal year, thereby providing an adequate preparedness funding baseline for all States. The Secretary, acting in cooperation with congressional appropriators, would naturally exercise the authority to make upward adjustments with the remaining funds. However, the .75 percent baseline will make certain that rural first responders are not left out. At the same time, this mechanism will see to it that areas facing higher risk and greater vulnerabilities might receive more funds. Rural areas will not be left out, but areas that are home to elements of the Nation's critical infrastructure, as well as areas with

higher population density—both of which are the most likely targets for international terrorists—will be safeguarded.

Finally, this bill also provides a logical flexibility for Federal officials who oversee unspent funds previously appropriated to the Office for Domestic Preparedness. Rather than allowing this money to sit idle while our first responders clamor for adequate funding, this legislation will enable DHS to dispense funds to those States that obtain a waiver from the Secretary. Funds earmarked for one purpose, such as training, may then be used to pay costs associated with another first responder need, such as equipment.

I commend the Senator from Maine for her close personal attention to the matter at hand, and for her hard work in putting this legislation together. She has worked closely with many of the groups who will benefit directly from this legislation. While many of these organizations do not endorse legislation, the approach we offer today has been supported by the National Governors Association, the National Conference State Legislatures, the Council of State Governments, the National Association of Counties, the National League of Cities, the International City/County Management Association, and the International Association of Fire Fighters.

I believe the Homeland Security Grant Enhancement Act will greatly improve coordination between the various agencies that distribute homeland security funds to our States, communities, and first responders. Relevant information will flow more freely and the grant application and funding process will become more clear and more flexible. While we have made great strides in our efforts against international terrorists, stifling their ability to conduct operations, the danger of an attack remains. This legislation improves efficiency within a multi-agency bureaucracy, easing the burdens on those who are charged with defending the homeland. These changes will also better prepare our first responders to meet the threats they face.

PROSECUTING GUN-RELATED CRIMES

Mr. LEVIN. Mr. President, last month I spoke about a report released by Americans for Gun Safety Foundation entitled, "The Enforcement Gap: Federal Gun Laws Ignored," analyzing the Justice Department's commitment to enforcing and prosecuting gun laws. The report examines prosecution data acquired from the Justice Department under the Freedom of Information Act for fiscal years 2000 through 2002. The AGS study reveals a significant gap between the number of federal gun crimes committed and the number of Federal prosecutions initiated.

In response to this report, Representative JOHN DINGELL, the Dean of the Michigan delegation in the House, sent